

A Guide to Asperger's Syndrome.

Christopher Gillberg. *Cambridge University Press, NY. 2002. 178 pp. \$30.00 US.*

The title of this book understates the author's accomplishments in this area. Christopher Gillberg is a world renowned Swedish professor and researcher who has made seminal contributions to the study of Asperger's Syndrome, most notably by publishing diagnostic criteria a decade earlier. Although billed as a handbook for clinicians, it will also be useful for other professionals and family members working or living with individuals with Asperger's Syndrome. The reader receives a compilation of the author's rich clinical experience. Indeed, one is often left feeling that they have attended a small and intimate tutorial with the author complete with the results of published studies of epidemiological and pathophysiological findings; rich anecdotes from the earliest clinicians to recognize this complex disorder; and, the famous and interesting historical accounts of people who have lived with the effects of Asperger's Syndrome.

Gillberg credits the first account of this syndrome to the Russian, Ewa Ssucharewa, in which she called it 'schizoid psychopathy,' (personality disorder) in children. This account was published twenty years before Hans Asperger's published description of 'autistic personality disorder.' Although Asperger's paper was written 1944, just months after Leo Kanner's seminal paper on early infantile autism, he was not formally recognized for his early paper in the English speaking world until 1981 when British autism expert, Lorna Wing wrote a paper coining the term Asperger's Syndrome.

Asperger was both a skilled clinical observer and therapist, noted by Gillberg in his use of the term "Heilpädagogik" which refers to the educational modes of intervention that Asperger used to address social skills deficits in the children he treated. Gillberg makes the interesting observation that Asperger, himself, may have had a number of characteristics similar to his 'Asperger patients.'

Gillberg appears to 'take the bull by the horns' as he contrasts the published diagnostic criteria of Asperger's Syndrome with other similar conditions such as deficits of attention, motor control and perception, (DAMP); semantic-pragmatic disorder; nonverbal learning disability; high functioning autism; Tourette's Syndrome and pathological demand avoidance. Given the similarity between these various entities, Gillberg authoritatively encourages the reader to move past the diagnostic limits to observe one's patients as individuals who show great sensitivity to some aspects of their world yet greatly limitations in their capacity for empathy and social reciprocity.

Perhaps the most important lesson Gillberg had presented to the reader is that he is committed to the cause of understanding and advocating for persons with Asperger's Syndrome. Repeatedly, he emphasizes how important it is to recognize that there are redeeming features in these children and for family members. This is aptly accomplished by devoting an entire chapter to "What about all those famous geniuses?" He appears to dare parents and clinicians to look beyond the obvious social difficulties and imagine that this must be one of those individuals capable of great things.

I have enjoyed this book immensely, not only because the author's style is so intimate and supportive, but also because I believe he has accomplished so much more than the title suggests by opening a quite unexpected vista to the reader on the disorder and those affected by it.

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ADHD in Adolescents: Diagnosis and Treatment

Arthur L Robin. *The Guilford Press, NY. 1998. 461 pp. \$65.00 USA.*

Despite the three years since Robin's book has been published, the paucity of research in the adolescent Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) field is astounding. Robin does his best to present what literature there is up to that time and supplements the information with practical strategies to manage some of the basic issues related to rearing an adolescent with this disorder.

Robin begins the book engaging the reader with very basic issues of phenomenology and expands on this knowledge by walking the reader from childhood into adolescence. Much of the book concentrates on ADHD instead of adolescence, per se, which is helpful if one was to read only one book on ADHD. On the other hand, the experienced parent or professional might find the first half of the book less of interest. In addition, some broader developmental frameworks to supplement the story of entry into adolescence would have been helpful. Nonetheless, the information presented is important.

The second half of the book is focused on adolescent ADHD and practical suggestions are presented from a background of considerable clinical experience. One can't fault Robin on the lack of evidence-based literature to support his strategies as the research is just now beginning to address many of these issues. The ideas are practical and comprehensive and many of the charts are available to the clinician for dissemination to their patients or could be used as is for clinical diagnostic purposes.

The biggest complaint I have about ADHD books in general, and Robin's is no exception, is that it reads like a self-help book but has little visual attractiveness. Youths and their family members with ADHD would be turned off by the presentation. In this context, this book fails. However, an obsessional parent or clinician seeking practical advice from an experienced clinician will benefit. It can't be categorized as a research review as there are relatively few collaborators. It is Robin's opinion, to a large extent, and it covers the territory well but the audience that it seeks out might not be pleased with the delivery. One hopes that Robin will produce a workbook to supplement the material and make it user friendly to both parents and adolescents.

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